GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:20
ANSWERED ON:23.11.2005
MALNUTRITION IN CHILDERN
Chandel Shri Suresh

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether one among three children suffering from malnutrition in the world is in India as per a recent publication of the UNICEF;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the efforts made by the Government to deal with this problem;

(d) whether 47% children upto the age of 4 years were found suffering from malnutrition on the basis of the criterion relating to weight of a child vis-Ã -vis his age as per the National Family Health Survey conducted in 1998-99;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to deal with the problem of malnutrition amongst children?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a) to(f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 20 FOR 23RD NOVEMBER, 2005.

As per a recent UNICEF document titled `Child Development and Nutrition programme - Plan of Operations 2003-07`, one among three children suffering from malnutrition world over is in India.

The National Family Health Survey-II (1998-99), has estimated that almost half of children under three years of age (47%) are underweight, and a similarly percentage (46%) are stunted. The proportion of children who are severely undernourished is 18% according to weight for age and 23% according to height for age.

The proportion of children under three years of age who are underweight decreased from 52% in NFHS-I (1992-93) to 47% in NHFS-II (1998-99) and the proportion severely underweight decreased form 20% to 18%.

Malnutrition is a multifaceted problem and requires a series of action in different spheres to address various contributory factors. Increased food production, targetted public distribution system, poverty alleviation programmes etc. contribute to improving food and nutrition security of the people.

The Government of India has initiated several measures to improve the nutritional and health status of infants, young children, pregnant and lactating mothers including those in the backward regions and economically weaker sections. The Government has adopted a National Nutrition Policy in 1993 envisaging short term and long term measures. A National Plan of Action for Nutrition was developed for 14 Ministries. Further, a National Nutrition Mission has been set up. A national Programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education (Mid-day Meal programme) is also being implemented.

The Integrated Child Development Services scheme, being implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development, is aimed at holistic development of children from birth to six years of age and lactating mothers from disadvantages sections of society. The services provided are supplementary nutrition, immunization for infants, health check up and pre school non formal education for both children and pregnant mothers. The supplementary feeding under the ICDS aims at bridging the calories and protein gap in the diets of pre-school children, pregnant and lactating mothers. The supplementary food provides Calories and 8-10gm Protein to pre-school children.

Under the Reproductive and Child Health Programme being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the interventions being implemented for nutrition are promotion of exclusive breastfeeding till six months of age, timely introduction of complementary feeding and programme for supplementation with iron and folic acid and Vitamin A. Programmes for prevention of Specific Micronutrient Deficiency disorders such as National Iodine Deficiency Disease Control Programme (NIDDCP) and Pilot Programme for control of Micronutrient Deficiencies are also being implemented.